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ABSTRACT

The goal of the Rudolf Steiner Farm School (which employs the spiritual/scientific path of knowledge described by Rudolf Steiner in the early 1900's) is to awaken and cultivate the capacities of the full human being through education, the arts, and agriculture, in direct relationship with nature, the spiritual universe, and current times. The institution's branches are mutually interlinked yet freely cooperating parts of the whole. The Farm branch is operated according to the principles of bio-dynamic agriculture and offers apprenticeships to young farmers wishing to train in bio-dynamic methods. The School branch is an independent, co-educational day school which uses the methods of Rudolf Steiner (as practiced in more than 160 schools in some 20 countries) and draws directly from farm and garden, from artistic and practical activities for educational experiences. The Hostel and Visiting Student branch enables urban and suburban students to live at the school for varying time periods and to learn subjects and skills related to farm and country life, e.g. botany, earth science, animal study, astronomy, and surveying. The Artists and Artisans branch offers painting, handcrafts, music, dramatic and poetic arts, staging, eurythmy, and architecture. Other programs include summer camps and adult workshops and conferences. (AN)

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THE RUDOLF STEINER FARM SCHOOL occupies 350 acres in a wide, sunlit valley which rises to wooded hills, encompasses croplands, pastures and forest, and is traversed by two clear streams. These farm lands surround the tiny hamlet of Harlemville. In this open, yet sheltered valley, an educational and social organism is arising, made up of individual active parts, each with its own tasks, yet each contributing to the greater life of the whole. It has been given the name Hawthorne Valley, from which the individual branches take their name.

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Out of the realization of the urgent needs of our times, the Farm School was established in August, 1972, as a place where education, agriculture and artistic life should work together in interrelated activity, in an endeavor to meet the challenges and responsibilities of the decades to come. Basic to every aspect of its life are the insights into the nature of man, of the developing child, and of the world which can be gained from the knowledge first presented by Rudolf Steiner at the beginning of this century.

The spiritual-scientific path of knowledge which he describes has made possible new approaches in science, agriculture, education, the arts, social and religious life, and medical healing, all of which contribute to the life of the Farm School. The following branches are the mutually interlinked yet freely cooperating parts of the whole:

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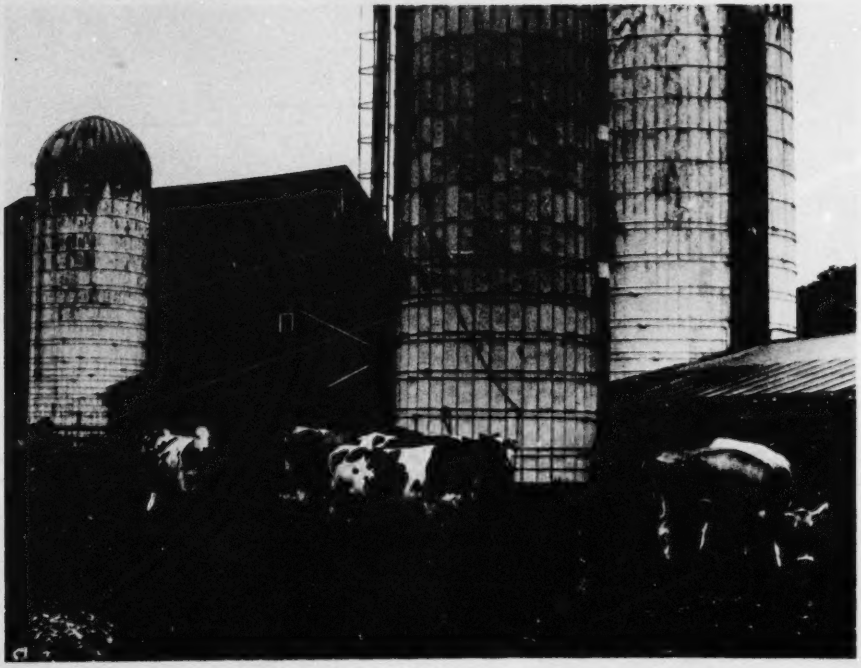

THE HAWTHORNE VALLEY FARM provides the foundation on which the activities of the Farm School take place, offering at the same time a health-giving background and a wealth of experiences and resources to the educational and artistic life of the immediate and wider community.

In recognition that man's responsibility to the soil, to plants, animals, and to his own human well-being requires new insights and new approaches, the farm is operated according to the principles of bio-dynamic agriculture, as a diversified, largely self-contained farm organism, by an experienced farmer, together with a co-worker and apprentices. Bio-dynamics, originated by Rudolf Steiner as an advanced organic method of enhancing soil fertility and plant and animal health, is already widely known in Europe and is coming to be recognized also in this country. It offers a technically and economically sound alternative to one-sided, industrialized agricultural methods and to the mounting problems arising from their use.

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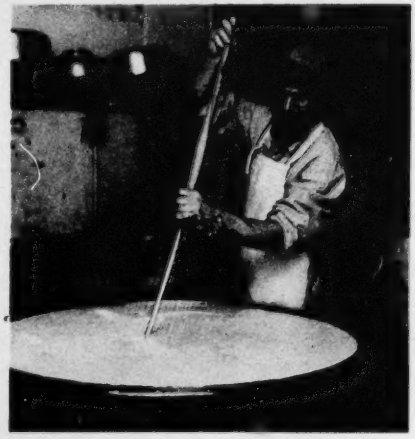
The farm produces milk, meat, eggs and grains, milling its own flour and processing most of the milk into an excellent cheese. Farm products are sold locally in the farm store and cheese is also shipped to more distant customers. Hawthorne Valley Farm offers a three-year, on-the-job apprenticeship for young farmers wishing to train in bio-dynamic methods, enabling them also to join in the cultural life of the Farm School as a whole.



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THE HAWTHORNE VALLEY SCHOOL is an independent, co-educational day school, where children, without regard for color, race or creed, receive schooling based on the methods of Rudolf Steiner, or Waldorf, education, as practiced in more than 160 schools in some twenty countries of the free world. The school draws its pupils from the immediate vicinity and from the Hudson-Taconic-Berkshire region.

The broad curriculum provides a balanced, many-sided education and the vivid, artistic methods of instruction awaken lively interest and response. What especially distinguishes the Hawthorne Valley School is that, in accordance with the goals of the Farm School, it can draw directly on farm and garden, on artistic and practical activities as sources of educational experience. By doing so it works to cultivate a lasting awareness and respect for the surrounding world as well as to offer a method of schooling which engages and strengthens the children's will, so greatly needed today.

The teachers in the Hawthorne Valley School are jointly responsible, as a faculty, for the life and conduct of the school. They see the schooling of an intelligence which is perceptive, practical and truly moral as one of the

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. . . it is "aliveness" that must be the guiding principle. "Aliveness" in the teacher must pass over to "aliveness" in the children.

RUDOLF STEINER

most urgent tasks for American education in the coming years, and they recognize that this can only happen when the full human being is engaged and is educated out of the experience of life as a whole. Having started as an elementary school, which is fast outgrowing its classroom space, new building plans are underway which will make possible the attainment of its goal as a full twelve-year school, involving in its achievement an ever closer interrelationship of all branches of the Farm School.

Our highest endeavor must be to develop free human beings who are able of themselves to impart purpose and direction to their lives.

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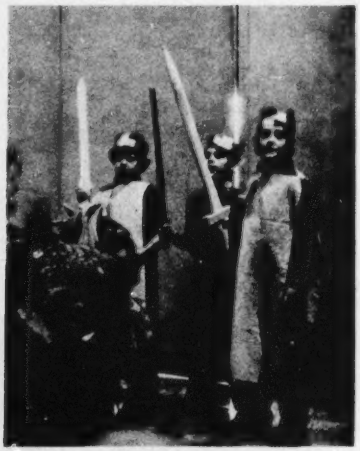
The interrelated branches of the Farm School draw their life from insight into the spiritual nature of man and of the world, which they seek to embody in the quality and methods of all their pursuits. The pictures on these two pages show School, Hostel and Summer Activities.



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THE HAWTHORNE VALLEY HOSTEL and Visiting Student Program, with dormitory and dining facilities for up to thirty children, enables classes from city and suburban schools to live at the Farm School for varying periods of time. The Hostel faculty guides and teaches them in subjects and skills related to farm and country life. Subjects such as botany, earth science, animal study, astronomy and surveying can be pursued and brought to life through direct observation and practice. First-hand experience in conservation and ecology is an important part of everything which the children do and learn.

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Besides sharing in the chores — feeding animals, gathering eggs, working in the garden, participating in seasonal projects such as cider pressing, woodcutting and learning to bake bread, churn butter and help with cooking — there is opportunity for crafts and artistic work, as well as time for fun, for square dancing in the barn, cookouts, swimming, hiking, ice skating and cross-country skiing in season.

Students and teachers working together learn from each other in ways not possible in the classroom. Students gain invaluable glimpses into themselves as individuals and as members of a group; they gain confidence in their ability to be useful, dependable and creative. Teachers accompanying classes can observe students in a variety of working situations that yield new insights and understanding.

The need for imagination, a sense of truth and a feeling of responsibility, these are the three forces which are the very nerve of education.

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HAWTHORNE VALLEY ARTISTS AND ARTISANS. The arts, handcrafts and cultural life are an integral part of the life and work of the Farm School, of its educational activities, of the life of the farm workers, and of the creative activities of the community as a whole. In working with color, form and tone, with speech and movement, with wood, cloth and metal — heart and mind are awakened, hand and will disciplined, and those creative forces tapped which can bring new life and vigor to human society. That such forces, so greatly needed today, may permeate increasingly all the Farm School activities is the task of those who work in this branch of endeavor.

The goal of offering extended training in individual arts, handcrafts, and vocational skills — and eventually the designing and production of articles useful for daily life — will be achieved as it becomes possible to offer support to more artists and artisans. Through the efforts of a small but growing group of experienced artists, however, a very encouraging beginning has already been made in the spheres of painting, handcrafts, music, the dramatic and poetic arts, staging, eurythmy and architecture. These efforts include regular workshops in artistic method, an adult painting course, a chorus, small chamber orchestra and recorder group.

The celebration of the festivals, the annual performance by co-workers of an Old English Christmas play, concerts and eurythmy performances, all contribute to the life of the community and the wider area. These activities

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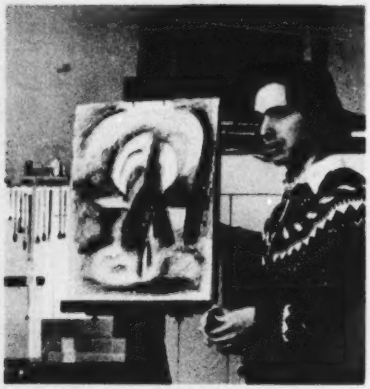

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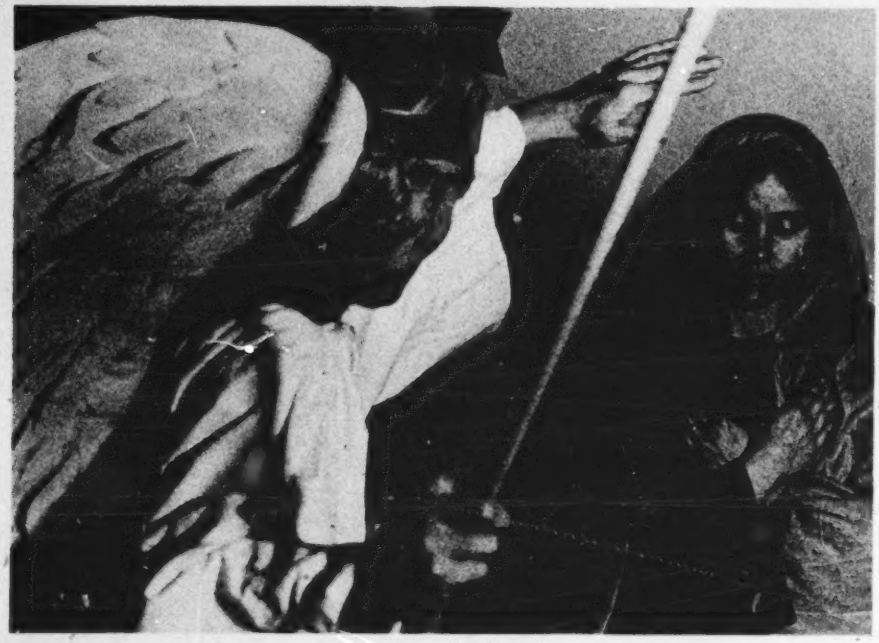
are fostered and arranged by the Hawthorne Valley Artists and Artisans, who, in striving to meet the creative tasks of our times, serve the artistic goals of the organism of the Farm School. As in the other branches, training in the impulses given by Rudolf Steiner is a basic aspect of their work.



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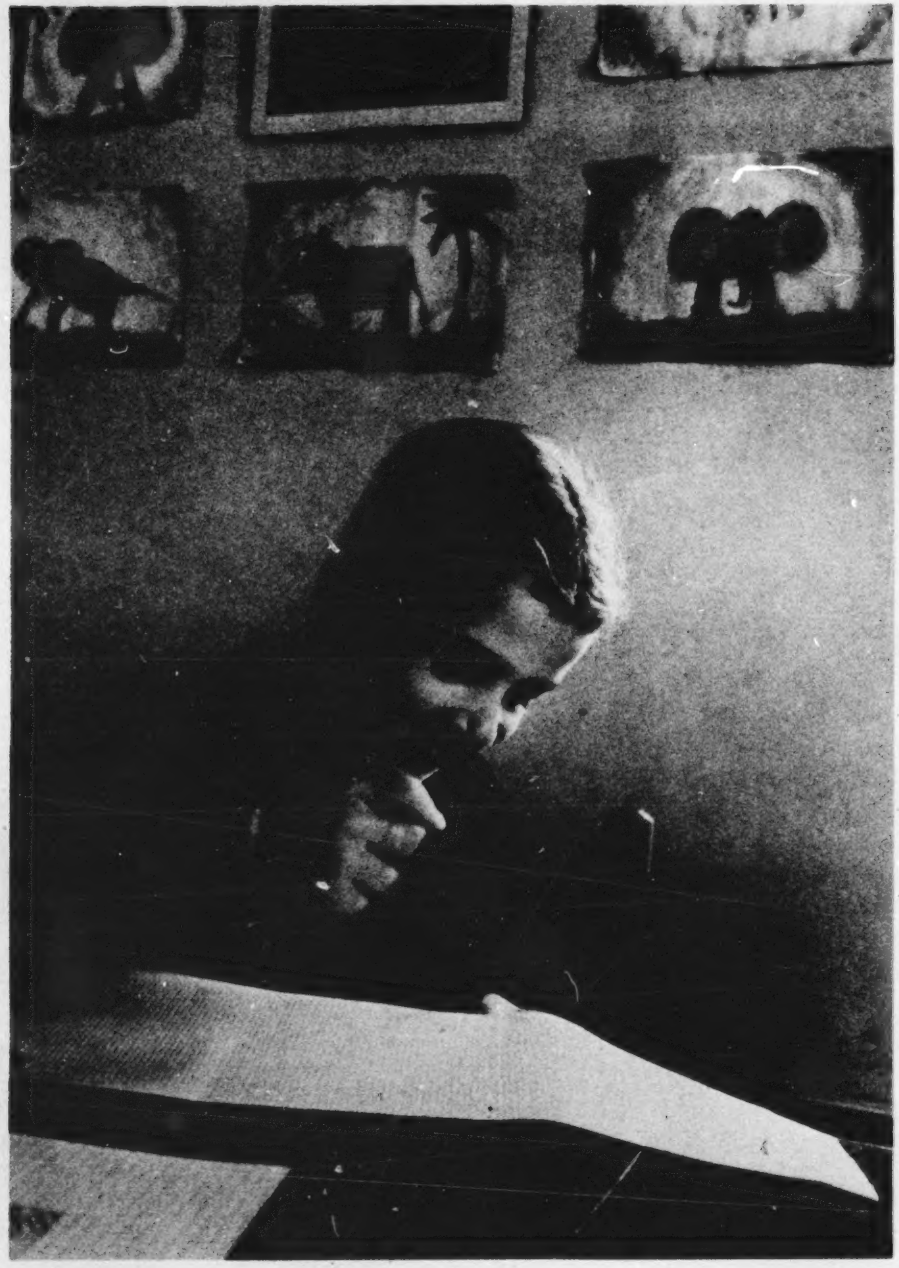

Joy and happiness in living, a love of all existence,
a power and energy for work—
such are among the lifelong results
of a right cultivation of the feeling for beauty and for art.

RUDOLF STEINER

BUILDINGS AND FACILITIES for these growing branches of the Farm School have been primitive from the start, but with concerted effort have been expanded under pressure of need. Now, as these are becoming inadequate, a building program is underway which will serve the School, the Visiting Program, the Farm and the surrounding community. Larger classroom space is imperative. A central hall and indoor activity space is essential. The present woodworking shop—a converted icehouse—will be supplemented as funds become available, by much needed workshop, studio and handcraft spaces and housing for woodworking machines.

SUMMER AT HAWTHORNE VALLEY FARM, a four-week camp session for boys and girls, eight to twelve years old, seeks to provide children with a full experience of nature through caring for farm animals, swimming, hiking, camping, horseback riding and horse care, and nature study, in addition to creative activity through painting, music, woodwork, drama and crafts. Children use the dormitory, dining hall, farm and school facilities.

AGAWAMUCK WILDERNESS ADVENTURE, a six-week summer camp session, helps young people in their early teens learn to live in and appreciate the wilderness, its processes and its natural beauty, and to behave responsibly in this environment. For part of the time, campers live in tents on a wooded hillside site on Farm School property, while at other times they are engaged in hiking, climbing and canoeing in the Berkshires, Catskills, Green Mountains and Adirondacks.

ADULT CONFERENCES AND WORKSHOPS are held in various fields. The annual Teachers' Conference and the workshops in Artistic Method have become part of the life of the Farm School. Conferences and smaller gatherings, sponsored both by the Farm School as well as by other groups, have also been held on themes such as medicine, farming and gardening, land use, and other aspects of spiritual-scientific study and research.

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GUESTHOUSE FACILITIES are available when dormitories are not occupied by student, camp or conference groups. Guests are most welcome to make use of them for modest rates. This enables adults, families and student groups to enjoy the Farm School's rural setting. The facilities are also available for rental to responsible university, church or social groups for workshops or retreats. Varied activities are available at such times, including participation in the festival celebrations of the year, artistic programs and classes, as well as in the seasonal outdoor activities mentioned above.

THE HEALING ARTS. Therapy and healing are recognized more and more as an integral and much needed element in education today because of the increasing impact of our civilization upon the growing child. The presence, therefore, of a school doctor, whose practice grows out of the same understanding of man and the world that underlies the entire educational effort, adds an important dimension to what the Farm School can offer.

The Healing Arts Group, serving the needs of the wider community as well as of the Farm School, presently consists of two physicians, three registered nurses (one of whom is an experienced midwife), a painter with therapeutic experience, a teacher of special education, and also offers therapeutic massage. A small house in the vicinity serves those in need of rest and care. Long-range plans involve the establishment of a therapeutic center ministering to the needs of the whole human being. Legal responsibility and the administering of funds will be assumed by a foundation.

SOCIAL FORMS. It is the cooperation of free individuals which makes it possible for the Farm School organism to function. Social and economic structures evolve as the community and its needs evolve. The faculty, comprising the permanent co-workers from all branches, meets once each week to review, discuss and determine the conduct of Farm School affairs. Income is shared, allowing, as far as possible, for differences in individual needs. The land and buildings are the property of the Rudolf Steiner Educational and Farming Association, Inc., a non-profit, tax-exempt organization, which is administered by a board of directors working in close conjunction with the faculty. Income derives from charges made for tuitions, use of facilities, sale of farm and other products, from performances, workshops and conferences, and from voluntary contributions. Capital needs must be met by donations, which are tax-deductible.

THE NEIGHBORING COMMUNITY. Participating in much of the Farm School's community life are parents of the Hawthorne Valley School, customers of Hawthorne Valley Farm, and other nearby friends and associates. Among them is a growing number of residents of Fern Hill, a land-trust residential community development adjacent to the Farm School. The active give-and-take, mutual interests, friendships and concerns which unite the members of the Farm School with the wider communities around them are a most essential and healthy element in the life of the Farm School itself. Among the tangible and most welcome evidences of neighborly collaboration are the establishment by nearby friends of a small store and social center in the village, and of a food cooperative housed in the basement of the dining hall.

TASKS AND GOALS. To awaken and cultivate by creative means the capacities of the full human being — head, heart and will — through the active interrelation of education, the arts and agriculture, and to do so in direct relationship with nature, with the spiritual universe, and with the times in which we live, is the goal which inspires and gives courage to the Farm School. This sustains it as an organism and builds its life as a community. It is a place of "becoming," and is Christian, in the widest sense of the word.

Thus, out of an ideal held in the hearts and minds of many persons over a number of years, a community of effort has begun to grow which is already demonstrating that it is fulfilling a real need. As the years pass and the difficulties and chaos of life increase, the needs will inevitably become greater, and it is to be hoped that the Rudolf Steiner Farm School will grow to meet these needs and may serve to inspire similar efforts in many other places.

Looking about us at this critical point of time in which we live, when the prime emphasis in life is on "to have," with the result that human civilization hangs on the brink of destruction, must we not say: Today it is no longer a question of "to have or not to have," it is no longer a question of "to be or not to be," but it is a question of "to become or not to become." *

KARL EGE

**Karl Ege*, An Evident Need of Our Times. *Adonis Press, 1979.*

FRIENDS AND GUARANTORS. That all this could happen and that it may continue, a strong circle of loyal supporters has been and is needed who carry the Farm School in their hearts and will. During the preparatory years, the first friends came forward and made the purchase of the farm and the start of the whole enterprise possible. Others joined them and the early years were sustained. Recently, a number of members of the loosely-knit association of *Friends* have undertaken a more definite commitment and have agreed to unite in a circle of *Guarantors*, who, together with *Faculty* and *Board*, stand for the future of the endeavor.

Today, both *Guarantors* and *Friends* are vital to the life of the Farm School as a whole. Although each branch of the organism has made significant strides toward economic self-sufficiency, the enterprise in its entirety is still very much in the pioneer phase and co-worker incomes are far below what they should be. To sustain the operation, to service capital indebtedness, and to fund all new developments, continuous voluntary financial support is needed. Anyone wishing to become a *Friend of the Farm School* will receive a most cordial welcome!

Those desiring to have their names placed on the mailing list to receive the *Newsletter* or to ask further questions, should write to:

The Secretary, Rudolf Steiner Farm School,
Harlemville, R.D.2, Ghent, N.Y. 12075,
Telephone (518) 672-7120 or -4750

Located on Route 217, near the Taconic State Parkway.

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The Farm School, Hawthorne Valley,
is gratefully indebted to
Joan Dufault
for a wide range of professional photography of its
many varied activities,
a selection of which appears here.

Other contributing photographers,
—their pictures marked with one and two stars, respectively—
are Wendy Neefus *and* Jeffrey Mitchell.